Proceedings Of
Thirtieth Conference
The National Federation of Church Clubs
Of the United States

Philadelphia, November 20 and 21, 1931
Hotel Bellevue-Stratford

Friday A.M., November 20

The President, Mr. John D. Allen of Chicago, called the Thirtieth Conference of the Federation to order. Roll Call showed the following clubs having representatives present: Church Club of Connecticut, Church Club of Chicago, Church Club of Springfield, Ill.; Church Club of Louisiana; Episcopalian Club of Massachusetts; Church Club of Newark, N. J.; Church Club of New York; Church Club of Cleveland, Ohio; Church Club of Philadelphia; Church Club of Delaware; Church Club of Long Island.

The President then read his opening address in which he declared that the Church Club movement is at the crossroads. "I am convinced we have come to a point in the history of this organization when we must either forge ahead to new and as yet untried fields, or we will gradually degenerate," said Mr. Allen. "The Thirtieth Conference of Church Clubs faces the task of determining important questions as to the future of the organization." Three courses were pointed out as open to the Federation by the President: 1. To go on as the Federation has in the past. 2. To adopt a program of action fitted to present needs and possibilities, with enlargement of work in view. 3. To consider the relationship of the existing Federation to the proposed new Laymen's Organization. Mr. Allen expressed himself in favor of enlarging the program of the existing Federation rather than abolition of its work in favor of the new organization or continuing on the present basis. He suggested permitting parish clubs and individuals to become members of the Federation.

An extended discussion took place on this last point. Mr. Henry R. Brigham, representing the Massachusetts Club, said this idea was entirely new to him and expressed the belief that such a plan would ultimately destroy the Church Club. Mr. Warren Kearny of Louisiana, then took up the discussion on the point of relationship between such a plan for the Federation and the proposed new Laymen's Organization. He said, in part:

"The object of the proposed new organization is to get down to every member in the Church and to reach them through the parish organizations. The Federation of Church Clubs has never gone into the parish at all. It is a diocesan matter. Our constitution says the object of this Federation shall be simply the work of the Church Club, coordinating this work, and securing increased efficiency of laymen's activities in the Church.

"The purpose of the proposed organization is similar to that of the Woman's Auxiliary. The constitution of the Woman's Auxiliary says that every

baptised woman is a member of the Auxiliary, ipso facto. So I think that would probably be one of the underlying principles of the new organization: that every man in the Church is eligible to membership and we would try to get him through parish clubs or parish organizations or in the smaller dioceses of the country, perhaps the organization would embrace two or more small stations. It seems to me we would be destroying entirely the idea of the Federation of Church Clubs if we took in individual members."

Mr. Kearny further said that since parish clubs will be the basic unit of the new organization, the Federation would conflict with this proposed organization if it accepted parochial clubs into its membership.

Mr. Frank Merrill of New York, in answer to inquiries, explained that the Laymen's Club of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, is a non-parochial club. Mr. Stanley M. Hunt of Connecticut, explained that the Connecticut Club embraces parochial clubs within its membership, having three at present. Mr. Brigham (Mass.) explained an idea which the Massachusetts Club is considering whereby the Church Club would include two official representatives from each parish in the diocese. This plan, he said, would make the Club representative of the entire diocese.

The question of how many dioceses of the Church now have Church Clubs was raised and the secretary, Mr. J. E. Boyle (Chicago), read the list. Mr. Boyle also told of efforts made during the last two years to interest non-member clubs in the Federation, with little success.

Mr. Oliver Gildersleeve (Conn.) made a motion that the Constitution of the Federation be so amended as to permit parish clubs to become members. The motion was seconded. Mr. Tracy B. Lord (Conn.) expressed belief that existing parochial clubs should be strengthened through Church Clubs and ultimately through the Federation, rather than to establish a new organization. Mr. Kearny opposed the motion to admit parish clubs, stating that on two previous occasions the Federation had gone on record offering its assistance in perfecting the proposed new organization, and also reviewing the history of General Convention's action on the proposed new organization. He said the new commission appointed at the Denver General Convention is now studying the whole proposition and will probably make a definite recommendation within three months. He further said that it is possible the organization of Church Clubs may be taken as the foundation for the new organization. He also stated that the function of existing Church Clubs is largely social, whereas the social side is not likely to play a large part in the new organization plan.

Mr. Merrill (N.Y.) moved to table the motion to admit parish clubs. The motion to table carried. In answer to questioning, Mr. Kearny (La.) said he saw no reason why the Church Clubs should go out of business if the new organization is effected; further he expressed beliefs that the one would strengthen the other.

At the request of Mr. McCarthy, Philadelphia, the Treasurer's report was presented by Mr. Boyle. It showed cash on hand, October 1, 1930, of $279.44; dues received from sixteen clubs, totaling $160; total receipts, $439.44; disbursements for Boston Convention, stamps, addressograph plates, printing, mimeographing, telegrams and exchange, $175.87, leaving a balance on hand, October 1, 1931, of $263.57. The report was adopted.

The president then read his report. Activities of the past year, as recited, included: issuance of a leaflet on the opportunities for service on behalf of laymen; contacting all existing Clubs not members of the Federation and the obtaining of applications for memberships from Clubs in Delaware, Pittsburgh and Quincy, Ill.; establishment of a Federation Bulletin, telling news of activities of various clubs; distribution of the report of the 1930 Conference in Boston, and holding of a dinner in Denver during General Convention when the Lord Bishop of St. Alban's was guest of honor and speaker.

Mr. Ehrhorn (N.Y.) recalled that the Pittsburgh club in years past had been an active member of the Federation. The President read a telegram of greeting from the Laymen's Round Table of California. The list of Church Clubs not now members of the Federation was read by the Secretary, on request.

On motion of Mr. Ehrhorn (N.Y.) the Laymen's League of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, N.Y., was elected to membership in the Federation.

Mr. Powers (N.Y.) suggested the advisability of holding the 1933 or 1934 Conference in Connecticut, in connection with the sesqui-centennial of the election and consecration of the first American Bishop.

Friday Afternoon, November 20

Mr. Kearny (La.) continued the discussion about the proposed Laymen's Organization. He said detailed plans had not yet been worked out but that the Joint Commission as created by General Convention is authorized to create and put into operation the new organization. He said he favored maximum dues of one dollar a year from each member in the new organization; that the new organization would function probably with a paid executive secretary; that there would be diocesan organizations but that the chief unit would center in the parish; that "one of the reasons why laymen have not responded more liberally and in a more interested way to the Church is because we have had no contact with the National Council; I should like to see that contact made without expense to the National Church."

In answer to a question as to whether the new laymen's organization would be auxiliary to the National Council, Mr. Kearny said he thought it would, adding: "It is a serious problem as to what we shall call ourselves. Shall we call it a club? As to the object, I should say the object is to promote the Kingdom of God among men. That is certainly inclusive of everything. We men have some superficial ideas and some information with regard

to Missions. I doubt if we have extended information at all with regard to religious education or Christian social service and I am afraid we have very limited knowledge about the missionary work. If we have interest and information with regard to the work of the Church it is going to mean a great thing for the Church and for the men. The new organization is not to be a money-raising agency. The organization would have no effect whatever on the Brotherhood of St. Andrew. I am convinced there are men in the Church who are ready to respond to the call for leadership along certain lines when they cannot respond to the call for personal evangelism."

Mr. Nelson of Washington, D.C., suggested the advisability of having a vice president from each province in the new organization.

Mr. Kearny mentioned the following as some of the possible works of the new organization: To bring about a more Christian observance of Sunday; promotion of religion in the home; setting of a Christian example for boys and girls; greater reverence in speech of God's Holy Name; holding of instruction classes preparatory to confirmation; diocesan missions or evangelistic campaigns; recruiting men for the ministry; increasing church missions; assisting missions by personal service. The diocesan organization might have a missionary known as the laymen's clergyman, to be sent about at the Bishop's direction, for missionary purposes. Fostering of study classes and cooperation with the Brotherhood. The fundamental principle back of the whole organization is that the unused latent power of the laity shall be harnessed and put to work.

The President asked that the roll be called of those present and that each delegate express himself as to whether he believes the plan as outlined by Mr. Kearny would work in his diocese. Mr. Brigham (Mass.) expressed doubt as to its advisability. Mr. Foote (N.Y.) voiced the opinion that already there are too many organizations but said he believed the New York Club would be willing to change its policies to conform with the new plan, if called upon to do so. Mr. Ehrhorn (N.Y.) said he was much in favor of trying the new plan. Mr. Powers (N.Y.) expressed doubt as to whether leaders for the new plan can be found. Mr. Hunt (Conn.) said he thought the first thing to do is to sell the Bishops on the plan. Mr. Lord (Conn.) said Church Clubs and men's clubs already are accomplishing things, that if means were not devised to interest men in the new set-up, it would be difficult to put over.

Mr. Nelson (Wash.) said he could not see any conflict between the new plan and the Brotherhood of St. Andrew; that he would like to see the new organization laid out along lines of the Woman's Auxiliary. Mr. Fast (Newark) said the new organization should be perfected through Church Clubs already organized. Mr. Spencer (Springfield, Ill.) expressed doubt whether sufficient leadership could be found but favored any plan which will strengthen work of the Church generally. Mr. Robbins (Cleveland) favored the new plan, adding he would not want to see the Federation of Church Clubs and its work sacrificed however. Mr. Merrill (N.Y.) said activities suggested for the new

organization are now being done by existing organizations and suggested the Church use the leadership it now has.

Mr. Gildersleeve (Conn.) reiterated statements of the morning, favoring enlargement of the Federation and existing Church Clubs, rather than the formation of a new organization. Mr. Eugene Thompson, Washington, then spoke generally on the proposed organization, suggesting that action on enlarging the Federation's scope be postponed until the new plan has been worked out. He stated emphatically that the new plan will not interfere with the Brotherhood of St. Andrew, adding that such will be strengthened. He reviewed the history of the new movement. "There are leaders," he continued, "but the Church has not found them. There is a way to find them and I think they will be found." He concluded by urging the men present to get behind the movement and support it wholeheartedly.

After further discussion, Mr. Gildersleeve's motion to amend the Constitution to permit parish clubs and individuals to become members of the Federation was taken from the table and referred to the Committee on Constitution. Mr. Ehrhorn (N.Y.) made a point of order that the motion could not be formally acted upon by the Conference since two months' notice as required by the Constitution had not been given. The committee was instructed to report back to the conference on the motion the following morning.

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Those in attendance at the Conference were guests of the Hon. A. M. Beitler, president of the Church Club of Philadelphia, at luncheon at the Union League Club.

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Friday Night, November 20

Delegates were guests of The Church Club of Philadelphia at dinner at The Lighthouse, followed by reports on what the various member clubs are doing, after which the group visited the Boys' Club of Kensington, sponsored by the Philadelphia Club.

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What Church Clubs Do:

New York: Holds a number of meetings each year the purpose of which is acquaintance, good-fellowship and spread of information about the Church's activities and ideals. Maintains a good religious library and pleasant club rooms. Membership, 650. Sponsors series of afternoon teas during Lent; also series of weekly Lenten lectures. Annual dinner early in 1932 will be omitted in favor of relief work in the Diocese.

Springfield, (Ill.): 130 members; dues, $1.00; three dinners each year to give churchmen a wider vision of the Church; three sectional meetings held after General Convention; bought three pieces of property for missions; sent ten boys to summer camp.

Louisiana: 110 members; held reception to new Bishop; week of inspirational services during Lent: striving to keep members enrolled and to develop larger diocesan consciousness.

Newark (N.J.): Club organized twenty-five years; 250 members; trying for 500; cooperates with Bishop and he tells club what he wants it to do; helps to increase extension fund of Diocese; held post-general convention dinner; dinner attendance averages from 400 to 600; dues, $3.00; always have application blanks at dinners.

Cleveland: 225 members; sustaining membership dues, $25.00; regular dues, $10.00; primary function, largely social; usually just men attend dinners.

Connecticut: In fortieth year; four meetings each year in four parts of Diocese; one, Ladies' Night; dues, $10.00; dues include cost of dinners. Assists boys' summer choir camp; has a balance on hand of $4,000 accumulated over period of years.

Massachusetts: Four dinners annually; largely social club; dues, $12.00, includes cost of dinners; this year, dues reduced to $10.00 account business conditions; give balance in treasury each year to advance mission projects; trying now to make club a working organization with general representation from all parishes, discussions on Church matters planned.

Philadelphia: Largely social club; 425 members; four or five important dinners each year; assists in Boy's Club work through special committee. Assists in week-day Lenten services.

Chicago: Is Diocesan host on social occasions; dinners each year include: Rectors', Wardens' & Vestrymens'; pre-diocesan convention, annual meeting and one general meeting; responsible for Lenten-Noonday services downtown and for Diocesan publicity program, including publication of diocesan magazine and newspaper publicity; stages Christmas parties annually for poor children; this year is giving substantial sum to diocesan emergency fund; maintains offices with paid staff.

Delaware: Club largely social; just recently became member of Federation; more than forty years old; 175 members; President of Federation and representatives of several Clubs guests of Delaware Club at its annual business meeting just prior to Federation Conference; holds annual Corporate Communion; assists Bishop in any way possible.

Saturday, November 21

After Holy Communion at Christ Church, when the Rev. Dr. Washburn, rector, spoke on opportunities before laity today, delegates were guests at breakfast in Christ Church Parish House. Inspection of Christ Church followed; also a visit to Independence Hall.

Final business meeting at Bellevue-Stratford Hotel:

Mr. Hulsart, president of the Church Club of Newark, reported on behalf of that club. Mr. Seaman, president of the Delaware Club, reported for that Club. Mr. Brigham (Mass.) submitted the following report of the Committee on Constitution, which was adopted:

"Your Committee on Constitution has considered the following proposed resolution referred to it: 'That the Constitution of the National Federation of Church Clubs be changed by proper methods to allow membership of individuals and parish clubs, the membership dues to be determined by our offices.'

"Your committee reports that under Section VII of the Constitution such amendments may only be made at the annual conference by a majority vote of the clubs represented, due notice of each intended change having been mailed to every club two months previous thereto. Therefore, the Federation at this Conference can vote whether or not it wishes to have such amendments drafted and notice sent out of such proposed amendments for consideration at the next annual conference.

"Your committee further suggests that the proposed resolution would necessitate the amendment of at least four of the eight sections of the Constitution as well as possibly the first section giving the name as a Federation of Church Clubs. Your attention is particularly called to the question of the powers to vote at conferences, namely whether an individual member will have the same power of voting as a delegate of a diocesan club or of a parish club or non-parochial club and whether a parish club should have the same number of delegates as a diocesan or non-parochial club.

"If this conference votes in favor of such proposed amendment and further suggests what it considers the respective voting powers of the different classes of members should be, your committee on the Constitution will draft such proposed amendments in order that the secretary may send due notice of their consideration before the next annual meeting."

Mr. Kearny (La.) submitted the following on behalf of the Committee on Resolutions:

"Whereas, this Conference has learned with interest of the appointment by General Convention of a new Joint Commission to study the advisability of a National Laymen's Organization, with power to create such an organization if deemed advisable, and

"Whereas, this Federation of Church Clubs in 1929 and in 1930 placed on record its approval in principle of such National Laymen's Organization,

"Therefore, be it resolved, that this Federation re-affirms the action taken in 1929 and 1930, endorsing in principle the said proposed organization and if requested to do so, will gladly cooperate with the said Joint Commission in perfecting plans for such organization, and

"Be it further resolved, that the Executive Committee of this Federation be and is hereby authorized to represent the Federation in such deliberations, and

"Be it further resolved, that the Executive Committee, in counsel with the Committee on Constitution, be and hereby is instructed to prepare and submit to the constituent Clubs composing the Federation such amendments, if any, as may be deemed necessary or advisable to the Constitution of this Federation to meet the situation presented by the new organization for laymen, if created; such amendments to be submitted not less than two months before the next annual Conference of this Federation."

The resolutions, on motion of Mr. Brigham, seconded by Mr. Seaman, were adopted.

On invitation of Mr. Spencer, Springfield, Ill., was chosen as the place of the next annual Conference. Resolutions expressing to President Beitler and other officers of the Philadelphia Club, grateful appreciation of the gracious hospitality extended to the delegates, were adopted and spread on the minutes of the Conference.

The Nominating Committee, Mr. Gildersleeve, Chairman, submitted the following nominations for officers of the Federation during the coming year:

President, Mr. John D. Allen, Chicago.
First Vice Pres., Mr. E. Osborne Coates, Philadelphia.
Second Vice Pres., Mr. R. J. Robbins, Cleveland.
Third Vice Pres., Mr. O. J. Seymour, Long Island.
Secretary-Treasurer, Mr. J. E. Boyle, Chicago.

Mr. Foote (N.Y.) moved election of the nominees. Mr. Ehrhorn (N.Y.) announced his opposition to the re-election of the same president for a second term, as a matter of principle and precedent in the Federation. Mr. Gildersleeve, on behalf of the Nominating Committee, explained that the Committee felt Mr. Allen should remain as President in view of the plans for the new Laymen's Organization, he being a member of the Joint Commission on such. The report of the Nominating Committee was adopted, Mr. Ehrhorn dissenting.

Mr. Leon C. Palmer, General Secretary of the Brotherhood of St. Andrew, was introduced to the Conference and extended greetings.

The Conference adjourned, sine die.

Saturday afternoon, the delegates were guests of the Philadelphia Club on a tour to Valley Forge, old St. David's Church and the home of the Hon. George Wharton Pepper, where tea was served. Saturday night, they were guests at the annual dinner of the Philadelphia Club at the Bellevue-Stratford Hotel, speakers being the Rt. Rev. Francis M. Taitt, D.D., Pennsylvania; Mr. John D. Allen, president of the Federation; the Rt. Rev. Charles Fiske of Central New York, and the Hon. George Wharton Pepper. Mr. Louis B. Runk, vice president of the Philadelphia Club, acted as toastmaster. Judge Beitler presented each delegate with copies of Oration at Valley Forge, by Henry Armitt Brown and President Hoover's Memorial Day Address, 1931, as mementoes of the Philadelphia Conference.

Appendix

Those in attendance at the Conference follow:

(complete list, by clubs)

Stanley M. Hunt	Connecticut Church Club
Oliver Gildersleeve	" " "
Tracy B. Lord	" " "
Edward R. Hardy	New York " "
Nathaniel Foote	" " " "
Thomas J. Powers, Jr.	" " " "
Frank Merrill	" " " "
Oscar W. Ehrhorn	" " " "
Jenner R. Fast	Newark " "
George W. Hulsart	" " "
Origen B. Seymour	Long Island " "
Henry R. Brigham	Episcopalian Club of Massachusetts
Franklin H. Spencer	Springfield Illinois Church Club
Hugh T. Nelson	Washington D.C. " "
Warren M. Kearny	Louisiana " "
Seaman	Delaware " "
L. J. Robbins	Cleveland " "
John D. Allen	Chicago " "
Joseph E. Boyle	" " "
A. M. Beitler	Philadelphia " "
Louis B. Runk	" " "
E. Osborn Coates	" " "
Ronald J. McCarthy	" " "

Several other members of the Philadelphia Club attended the various meetings.

NOTE: Additional Copies of this report may be had by writing the Secretary, 664 Rush Street, Chicago, at the rate of $10.00 per hundred.